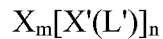


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) An excipient for a metal chelate contrast agent, wherein said metal chelate contrast agent, ~~M(L)~~, comprises a metal ion ~~M~~ complexed with an organic ligand ~~L~~, said excipient having the formula

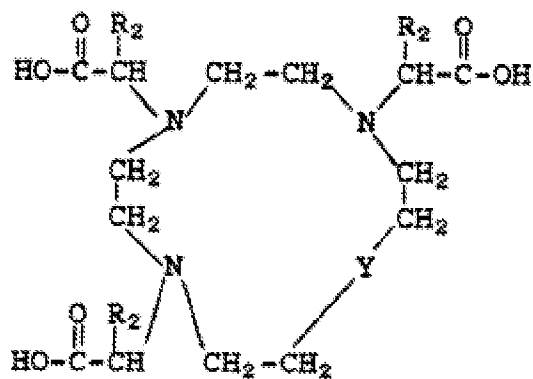


wherein X and X' are calcium, L' is an organic ligand which may be the same as the organic ligand of the metal chelate contrast agent L or may be another organic ligand which has a greater affinity for ~~M~~ the metal ion of the metal chelate contrast agent than for calcium or zinc, and wherein m is 1 and n is 2.

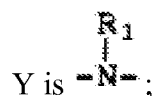
2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently amended) The excipient of claim 1 wherein ~~L~~ the organic ligand of the metal chelate contrast agent and L' are independently selected from linear and macrocyclic polyaminopolycarboxylic acids ~~and derivatives thereof~~.

4. (Currently amended) The excipient of claim 1 wherein ~~L~~ the organic ligand of the metal chelate contrast agent and L' are independently selected from compounds of the formula



wherein



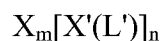
R_1 is hydroxypropyl and R_2 is methyl.

5-6 (Canceled)

7. (Currently amended) The excipient of claim 1 wherein L ~~is~~ the organic ligand of the metal chelate contrast agent and L' are independently selected from 1,4,7,10-tetra-azacyclododecane-1,4,7-triacetic acid, 1,4,7-tris-(carboxymethyl)-10-(2'-hydroxypropyl)-1,4,7,10-tetraazacyclododecane, N,N-bis[2-[bis(carboxymethyl)-amino]ethyl]glycine, DTPA-bis methylamide, DTPA bis morpholinoamide and DTPA bis 1,2-dihydroxypropylamide.

8. (Currently amended) The excipient of claim 1 wherein L ~~is~~ the organic ligand of the metal chelate contrast agent and L' are the same organic ligand.

9. (Currently amended) A contrast agent composition for use in magnetic resonance, x-ray, ultrasound and radio-diagnostic imaging comprising
a metal ion, M , complexed with an organic ligand, L ; and
a complex salt excipient of the formula



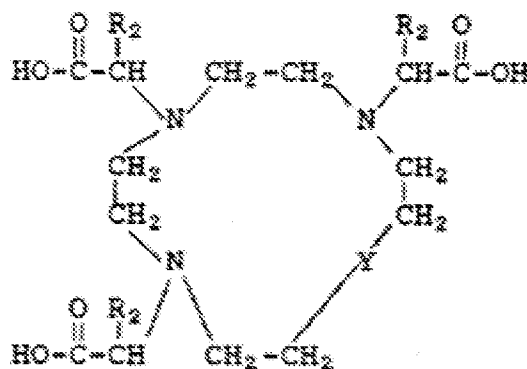
wherein X and X' are calcium, L' is an organic ligand which may be the same as the organic ligand of the metal chelate contrast agent L or may be another organic ligand which has a greater affinity for ~~M~~ the metal ion of the metal chelate contrast agent than for calcium or zinc, and wherein m is 1 and n is 2.; and,

a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier therefor.

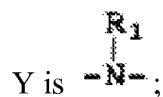
10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 9 wherein L and L' are independently selected from linear and macrocyclic polyaminopolycarboxylic acids ~~and derivatives thereof.~~

12. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 9 wherein L and L' are independently selected from compounds of the formula



wherein



R₁ is hydroxypropyl and R₂ is methyl.

13-14 (Canceled)

15. (Original) The composition of claim 9 wherein L and L' are independently selected from 1, 4, 7, 10-tetraazacyclododecane-1,4,7-triacetic acid, 1,4,7-tris(carboxymethyl)-

10-(2'-hydroxypropyl)-1,4,7,10-tetraazacyclododecane, N,N-bis[2-[bis(carboxymethyl)-amino]ethyl]glycine, DTPA bis methylamide, 1,4,7,10-tetraazacyclododecane-1,4,7,10-tetraacetic acid, DTPA bis morpholinoamide and DTPA bis 1,2-dihydroxypropylamide.

16. (Original) The composition of claim 9 wherein L and L' are the same organic ligand.

17. (Original) The composition of claim 9 wherein the mole ratio of said complex salt to said metal chelate contrast agent is between about 0.05 and 10 percent.

18. (Original) The composition of claim 9 wherein said metal ion is selected from paramagnetic metal atoms, lanthanide series elements, yttrium, and the transition series elements.

19. (Original) The composition of claim 18 wherein said paramagnetic metals are selected from gadolinium(III), dysprosium(III), manganese(II), manganese(III), chromium(III), iron(II) and iron(III).

20. (Original) The composition of claim 9 wherein said metal ion complexed with an organic ligand is gadolinium(III) 1,4,7-tris(carboxymethyl)-10-(2'-hydroxypropyl)-1,4,7,10-tetraazacyclododecane and said excipient is calcium bis[1,4,7-tris(carboxy-methyl)-10-(2'-hydroxypropyl)-1,4,7,10-tetraazacyclododecanatocalcium(II)].

21-46 (Canceled)